

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, RP

SUBJECT: LABOR RESTRUCTURING: PRESSURE REMAINS HIGH

REF: MANILA 12356(A)

MANILA 13067(B)

SUMMARY: DUE TO LAST-MINUTE SNAGS, LABOR SECRETARY BLAS OPLE WAS NOT ABLE TO ANNOUNCE BROAD OUTLINES OF LABOR UNIFICATION PROGRAM AND FORMATION OF NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTER (NTUC) UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION BY NOVEMBER 1 IMPLEMENTATION DATE OF NEW LABOR CODE (SEE REF B.) FOLLOWING VARIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS, HOWEVER, EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT STILL EXPECTED. WHILE BOTH OPLE AND LABOR UNDERSECRETARY AMADO INCIONG ACTIVE BEHIND SCENES, DOL STILL EXPECTS LABOR TO CLEAN ITS OWN HOUSE AND REMAINS SENSITIVE TO ANY CHARGE THAT GOVERNMENT IS INTERFERING IN TRADE UNION MATTERS. END SUMMARY

1. ALTHOUGH OPLE HAD HOPED TO BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE BROAD OUTLINES OF LABOR UNIFICATION PROGRAM AND FORMATION NATIONAL TRADE UNION CENTER (NTUC - SEE REF A) BY NOV. 1 LAST-MINUTE SNAGS PREVENTED THIS. FOR ONE THING, NUMBER OF SECOND ECHELON LABOR LEADERS RESENTED WHAT THEY FELT TO BE POWER PLAY AMONG SO-CALLED -BIG BOYS" WHICH GAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TOP NTUC SLOTS TO OCA, MENDOZA, AND TAN. THEY COMPLAINED

OF FAIT ACCOMPLI NATURE OF "DEAL" AND LACK OF CONSULTATION DOWN THE LINE.

2. MANAGEMENT, ON ITS SIDE, BALKED WHEN IT SUDDENLY REALIZED IT COULD NOT YET SPEAK WITH SINGLE VOICE TO ANY UNIFIED NATIONAL LABOR GROUP. LATTER PROBLEM HAS SINCE BEEN CORRECTED UNDER PRODDING FROM OPLE. LEADERS OF MAJOR TRADE CHAMBERS AND BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS ON NOVEMBER 2 ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF EMPLOYERS "WHICH COULD RESPOND TO THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS."

3. IN DEFERENCE TO COMPLAINTS OF LESSER TRADE UNION LEADERS, A "RESTRUCTURING COMMITTEE" OF 7 LABOR LEADERS (INCLUDING THREE OF THEIR OWN SPOKESMEN) UNDER THE "IMPARTIAL" CHAIRMANSHIP OF OPLE IS NOW CHARGED WITH RIDING HERD ON ALL RESTRUCTURING ACTIVITIES. ACCORDING TO INCIONG, THIS ACCOMMODATION NOW PAVES WAY FOR EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF A "PRELIMINARY" NTUC (WITH OFFICERS ESSENTIALLY AS LISTED IN REF. A) WHICH WILL RUN THINGS UNTIL THE EVENTUAL FORMATION OF ALL THE INDUSTRIAL UNIONS.

COMMENT: OPLE AND INCIONG CONTINUE TO WORK BEHIND THE SCENES TO EXPEDITE LABOR RESTRUCTURING PROCESS. DOL, HOWEVER, STILL EXPECTS LABOR TO CLEAN ITS OWN HOUSE AND REMAINS SENSITIVE TO ANY CHARGE THAT GOVERNMENT IS INTERFERING IN TRADE UNION MATTERS. AT THIS READING, APPEARS THAT ONE INDUSTRY/ONE UNION CONCEPT WILL INVOLVE 10 INDUSTRIAL AND 61 SUB-INDUSTRIAL GROUPS. WITH ACQUIESCENCE OF LABOR, INDICATIONS ARE THAT DOL'S BUREAU OF LABOR RELATIONS WILL MONITOR SCHEDULING OF FOUNDING CONVENTIONS FOR INDUSTRIAL AND SUB-INDUSTRIAL UNIONS.
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